

**MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2018
4:00 PM
ALTA COMMUNITY CENTER
ALTA, UTAH**

1. Call the meeting to order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. Mayor Sondak and Council members Cliff Curry and Sheridan Davis were present. Council members Elise Morgan and Margaret Bourke were excused.

2. Citizen Input – 00:01:14

The following individuals provided comments on this matter: Dawn Page, Frank Buselli, Ginny Marie Leines, Kim Goldsmith, Carolyn Anctil and Gabe Garcia

The following is a list of topics addressed by these individuals:

- They consider having a dog license a privilege
- They try to be a responsible dog owners
- Request the council consider the value the dogs provide to a person's and family's wellbeing.
- Satisfied with the arrangement outlined in Article 5(2)(9) of the ordinance and plea that the council not change this section
- Do not add another layer of regulation – the current regulations need to be policed and enforced.
- The amount of waste created by dogs and the ways to address this waste.
- Create a dog park in the town
- What is the standard safety watershed feces contamination level permitted in the canyon? What is the present level, how is it monitored, who does the monitoring and where can the public view that data?
- Maybe the Problem is with public perception as it relates in dogs in the town. Why certain dogs are permitted and others are not.
- Address a plan that will communicate the rules that govern the dogs to the public – public relations campaign
- Posting signs at the entrance to the town that state – “Dogs by Alta Town Permit Only”
- How to clearly identify licensed dogs
- Poop Stations in town

- The notion that dogs provide joy to people's lives and help with mental health issues.
- Advertise more that outside dogs are not allowed

The treatment of ADA service dogs was addressed by Rich Mrazik and Mike Morey.

3. Discussion – Town of Alta Dog Ordinance – 00:19:48

The Mayor reviewed why the status quo is problematic. Harris explained that the USFS District Ranger, Bekee Hotze, had requested the town to do things differently related to dogs in the Town of Alta. The Mayor opined that the town is interdependent with the USFS on a number of dimensions

There is a certain amount of anxiety and frustration produced in not having a dog permit because one is waiting for the lottery and this stuck the Mayor as problematic. Harris did not see the lottery system to be a great system especially when it is tied to a number of permits; this stuck Harris as rather arbitrary. Harris reviewed the current town code.

Harris opined that there is an arbitrariness of issuing temporary dog tags year after year and felt the council try and address this issue.

- Watershed science and Alta's legal authority 00:20:10

Harris had read many articles and research and questioned professionals on the science of watersheds and the effects of dogs on the degradation of watersheds and water quality. Harris highlighted that science and research. The science concludes that there is a negative relationship between dog waste and water quality and a clear relationship between dogs and degraded wildlife. Harris also concluded that people are biased in the way they perceive and report their behavior – people over report that they always keep their dog on a leash and pick up after them.

Harris addressed the legal authority related to dog regulations – the overarching rule is Title 14 of the Salt Lake Valley Health Department Regulations. Harris reviewed this regulation and how it addresses the Town of Alta and its ability to license dogs.

Harris went on to state that the USFS is the predominate land owner in the Town of Alta. The current forest order prohibits dogs in Salt Lake City watersheds and looks to Salt Lake City, UPD and the Town of Alta to help manage this prohibition. It was Harris understanding that the USFS respects the Town of Alta's authority to license dogs. What the USFS would like is to see is a more limited impact both in terms of watershed management and public perception.

Also, he stated it is the town's expectation that all dog owners read the dog regulations and abide by those regulations.

Mike Morey spoke to his department's enforcement of the dog regulations. The Department's goal is compliance – asking dog owners to do what they have promised to do.

The fine for bringing a dog up the canyon is in the \$200 range. There could be multiple layers of fines as well.

Cliff Curry stated that when we say the citizens of Alta are the Town constituent that is not just another word for customers. The Mayor and Town Council represent the constituents of Alta so he wanted to be careful about the idea that the Town of Alta as a body then regulates the constituents. Cliff addressed the science of the impact of dogs on the watershed and water quality and commented that the impact has not been quantified to the Council-it could be less than 1% to our knowledge. Cliff also commented that dog feces are a social problem as well. Cliff objects to dogs running loose without direct supervision. If the owner does not have their eyes on the dog, most likely the dog will poop and the owner will not be able to locate the feces. We have to maintain the perspective of not equating one violation with every other violation – let's maintain some common sense perspective of what is important to our community.

Sheridan Davis concurred with Cliff's comments and went on to comment that she was tempted to let this "storm roll over us". Sheridan went on to opine that the more the town presents this matter as a problem, the more problematic it becomes. Sheridan would like to see more freedoms not less and encouraged dog owners to abide by the rules and regulation. Sheridan argued that cars are at least if not more deleterious than dogs.

Harris would not like to issue 30 odd long term renewal temporary licenses and suggested that we increase the number of full time permanent to address this matter. Harris felt that if that approach makes sense, the question should be asked - how many licenses should the town issue.

Harris went over the process of issuance of a temporary license.

As a way of making a concrete proposal to start the conversation, Harris outlined his suggestions as follows:

- Number of licenses and categories – 00:56:22

The number of dog licenses should be equal to the number of households that could have a dog in the Town of Alta. That estimate is 150 households. Harris also

addressed the concept of shared ownership of a home and recommended that only one dog could be at the establishment at a time.

Long term renewal temporary licenses would generally not be issued except to people who are not residents and who currently have a temporary dog license – that license would be renewed through the remainder of the dog's life.

The Mayor would be able to continue issuing short term dog licenses which are currently two weeks in length and would propose a possible three day license to address, for example a wedding event.

- Locations where dogs are allowed/prohibited (on-leash/off-leash) – 01:01:04

Dogs may be on the owner's private property and on or north of highway 210, along the Westward Ho Road and when the ski area is not operating, in Collins Gulch if Special Use Permit holders and private land owners allow. Dogs would be prohibited from Albion Basin including on the summer road and in the transfer tow area in the commercial core. Dogs may not be at any time in any waterway.

- Clear identification of licensed dogs – 01:01:50

Dogs would have to be identified by name, owner and chip and identifiable by some kind of apparel – collar/chip

- Price of dog permit – full time and temporary – 01:02:07

The fees would be adjusted to cover the cost of administering the dog policy including the associated costs of the chip and/or collar.

Harris would recommend that the fee for the avalanche dogs be reduced and temporary license fees maintained as scheduled.

- Further Discussion and Input from the Mayor, Town Council, staff and public – 01:03:07

There was further discussion and questions on the proposal outlined by the Mayor and the current rules and regulations that were in place. Harris emphasized that the aforementioned was a proposal and encouraged input and further discussion on this matter.

Other options and suggestions were expressed by the Town Council and members of the public attending the meeting.

Harris concluded by saying that the Town Council could take this issue up further or they could not. If the Council decides to have further discussion on this matter, there would probably be additional work session(s).

4. Motion to Adjourn – 01:30:33

Cliff made a motion to adjourn the work session. There was a second by Sheridan Davis and the motion was carried.

Passed and approved this 8th day of February, 2018

s/Katherine S.W. Black
Town Clerk